

The Mission, Symbols, and Creed of the FFA Organization

AN ORGANIZATION with a rich heritage, like the National FFA Organization, usually has many symbolic images and statements that have great meaning to the past, present, and future direction of the organization. The FFA mission statement, colors, emblem, motto, and creed create an image in the minds of members and supporters of what the organization represents.



Objectives:



1. Explain the meaning of the FFA mission statement.
2. Explain the meaning of the FFA colors and emblem.
3. Explain the meaning of the FFA motto and creed.

Key Terms:



“Agricultural Education”
and “FFA”
career success
eagle
ear of corn

FFA creed
FFA motto
owl
personal growth
plow

premier leadership
rising sun
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The FFA Mission

A mission statement for any organization is a simple declaration of what the purpose of that organization is. The National FFA Organization has developed a very clear and direct mission:

*The National FFA Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth, and career success** through agricultural education.*

The three segments of the mission statement identify the primary drivers behind everything the organization does. **Premier leadership** refers to the leadership abilities developed in FFA members nationwide through the wide range of activities available to students. Effective leaders can guide other people toward individual or group goals. They can visualize goals and utilize a team to accomplish them. FFA members can take part in many activities and assume roles that provide leadership opportunities. Serving on committees, participating in fundraisers and career development events, and holding office develop students' ability to be effective leaders. Leaders gain skills that make them well prepared to accept new challenges.

Personal growth identifies the opportunities for students to grow as individuals in their abilities and citizenship. Personal growth provides the new experiences that allow students to be more knowledgeable of the world around them. Assisting those less fortunate, conducting community development activities, and traveling to places they have not been before helps students grow as individuals and gives them experiences to draw upon when making decisions later in life.

Career success is achieved by exposing students to the wide range of career opportunities and workplace skills learned through various conferences, competitions, and activities. The agricultural industry accounts for one in every five job opportunities in the United States. Some of the most high-tech jobs in research and development, biotechnology, and food and fuel sources are directly tied to agriculture. Agricultural education and the FFA organization help expose students to these career opportunities through career development events, the FFA scholarship program, and the support of the National FFA Foundation. Students who study agriculture at the middle and high school levels are exposed to career opportunities that others may not be aware of.

FFA Colors and Emblem

Organizations often use symbols to represent their heritage. FFA uses national blue and corn gold as its official colors for display in all FFA functions and paraphernalia. National blue represents the blue field of our nation's flag, and corn gold represents the corn that is ready for harvest throughout the United States—a sign of success. These colors remind us that FFA is a national organization that represents FFA members everywhere.

The FFA emblem uses six symbols to represent the organization.

A cross section of an **ear of corn** is the basis of the emblem, just as corn is a foundational crop of American agriculture. It represents the unity of the



FIGURE 1. The FFA emblem. (Used with written permission of the National FFA Organization)

organization, as corn is grown in every state. The **rising sun** is symbolic of a new day in agriculture. As agriculture continues to progress, so should every FFA member. The rising sun suggests that each new day brings new opportunities. The **plow** represents labor and tillage of the soil, foundations of American agriculture. Without labor and hard work, nothing can be accomplished. The **eagle** is a national symbol that represents the freedom our country offers and the national scope of the organization. Knowledge and wisdom are traits often associated with the owl. The **owl** symbolizes the knowledge required to be successful in agriculture. The words “**Agricultural Education**” and the name “**FFA**” indicate that learning and leadership are central themes needed for the agricultural industry. The six symbols together create an emblem that is representative of an organization that values hard work, knowledge, and a bright future in the industry of agriculture throughout the United States.

The FFA Motto and Creed

The **FFA motto** is a brief statement that provides FFA members with words to live by as they experience the organization:

Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve.

The motto identifies some very important core values of the organization. By “Learning to Do,” FFA members know that their organization is about education. “Doing to Learn” signifies that individuals learn most when they do things themselves. “Earning to Live,” gives the understanding that the organization provides great value in learning about career opportunities through supervised agricultural experience programs. “Living to Serve” shows the commitment that FFA has in developing students’ citizenship and interest in making others’ lives better.

The **FFA creed** is one of the oldest traditions of the National FFA Organization. **E. M. Tiffany** wrote the FFA creed, which was adopted at the 3rd FFA Convention. The creed was revised at the 38th and 63rd conventions to reflect changes in FFA membership and the agricultural industry. The creed is a basic statement of beliefs

The FFA Creed

I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds—achievements won by the present and past generations of agriculturists; in the promise of better days through better ways, even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us from the struggles of former years.

I believe that to live and work on a good farm, or to be engaged in other agricultural pursuits, is pleasant as well as challenging; for I know the joys and discomforts of agricultural life and hold an inborn fondness for those associations which, even in hours of discouragement, I cannot deny.

I believe in leadership from ourselves and respect from others. I believe in my own ability to work efficiently and think clearly, with such knowledge and skill as I can secure, and in the ability of progressive agriculturists to serve our own and the public interest in producing and marketing the product of our toil.

I believe in less dependence on begging and more power in bargaining; in the life abundant and enough honest wealth to help make it so—for others as well as myself; in less need for charity and more of it when needed; in being happy myself and playing square with those whose happiness depends upon me.

I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task.

Source: Official FFA Manual.

FIGURE 2. The FFA creed.

that identify the traditions of the agricultural industry and affirm confidence in the bright future of the agricultural industry. The first line, “I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds...,” is a powerful statement that shows that actions speak louder than words.

Summary:



The National FFA Organization has symbols, traditions, and statements that reflect the past, present, and future direction of the organization. These reveal the proud heritage and bright future of agriculture, agricultural education, and the FFA. By understanding these symbols, traditions, and statements, students can appreciate the heritage and the future they represent as FFA members.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What is the mission of the National FFA Organization? In what way can you participate in the three aspects of the mission?
2. Name the FFA colors. What is the relevance of these colors?
3. List the six symbols in the FFA emblem and describe their significance.
4. Write the FFA motto and explain how you can contribute to each line of the motto.
5. Who wrote the FFA creed, and when was it adopted?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Pick one paragraph of the FFA creed and write a one-page report on how you interpret its meaning in your life.

Web Links:



National FFA Organization

http://www.ffa.org/about_ffa/index.html

The FFA Creed

<http://www.ffa.org/students/html/creed.html>

Agricultural Career Profiles

<http://www.mycart.com/career-profiles>